

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

+ + + + +

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

+ + + + +

MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE

+ + + + +

OCS RENEWABLE ENERGY AND
ALTERNATIVE USE PROGRAMMATIC EIS

+ + + + +

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

+ + + + +

TUESDAY

MAY 23, 2006

+ + + + +

The public meeting was held in Bergstrom
Ballroom D, Austin Airport Hilton Hotel, 9515 New
Airport Drive, Austin, Texas, at 6:30 p.m.

PANEL MEMBERS:

BOB MOORE, Program Coordinator
SANDY BUTTERFIELD
DENNIS CHEW
DAVID COOKE
MAURICE HILL

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

I N D E X

<u>SPEAKER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Bob Moore, Program Coordinator/Manager Environmental Systems Management Environmental Assessment Division, Argonne National Laboratory, U. S. Department of Energy	3
Bob Wittmeyer	3
Joe Zebrowski, Sierra Club, Lone Star Chapter . .	9
Ed Gorecki, Hart Research Institute for Gulf . . of Mexico Studies, Texas A&M University	16

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. MOORE: Okay. I noticed there was one question during one of the two presentations so far. And there may be some more. So before we get into scoping comments directly, we'd like to see if there are more questions about the presentations that have been made.

I'll caution you that we don't want to try and write the environmental impact statement here this evening, but there was a lot of stuff put out here, and, if people have questions about that, we can field those right now. If anyone has a question, just raise your hand. And we can --

Yes, go ahead. We'll see if we --

MR. WITTMAYER: Just a short question.

Sandy, in your presentation, the power line from the offshore -- is that a DC line, or an AC line?

MR. BUTTERFIELD: AC line.

MR. WITTMAYER: AC line? Okay. Thank you.

MR. MOORE: That was your question?

MR. WITTMAYER: That was my question.

MR. MOORE: Hey.

Any other questions?

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 MR. HILL: I think he was going to follow
2 up.

3 MR. BUTTERFIELD: DC makes sense if you go
4 to distances farther than -- more than 500 miles
5 onshore. And offshore, if you're burying a cable, it
6 makes sense -- something like 150 miles. So that's --
7 we're not likely to see some PC lines.

8 MR. ZEBROWSKI: Can you discuss a scenario
9 of transfer of an alternate use situation from MMS to
10 another federal agency? Say the Coast Guard wanted to
11 use a platform or something out there. How would the
12 environmental review -- would that happen prior to any
13 inter-agency transfer, or would the agency it's being
14 transferred to be responsible for the environment
15 impact statement on whatever project they're going to
16 do?

17 MR. HILL: If the Coast Guard wanted to do
18 that?

19 MR. ZEBROWSKI: Or some other federal
20 agency.

21 MR. HILL: It -- well, it typically will
22 be a private sector proposal that would come in to us,
23 you know, for offshore renewable energy projects. And
24 we'd just go ahead and, you know, review those
25 projects and issue the lease's easements or rights of

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 way.

2 You know, there -- we haven't fully
3 developed the program. There could be federal
4 agencies like INRO who might have, you know, a test
5 facility or something like that, but we haven't worked
6 that out yet.

7 MR. ZEBROWSKI: I was simply thinking
8 alternate use, not just the energy, but the other
9 alternate uses that you described.

10 MR. HILL: Okay. Yes. If -- like if the
11 Coast Guard wanted to modify a platform or something?
12 Yes. They would come to us, and we would maintain
13 that jurisdiction. And we would just be looking at
14 the part that affected the platform.

15 We'd look at the engineering to make sure
16 that it could coexist with the oil and gas operations
17 on the platform. And we would issue a permit for
18 that. But if it was something like aqua culture or
19 something like that, you know, we wouldn't have the
20 jurisdiction for that.

21 MR. MOORE: Any other questions?

22 (Pause.)

23 MR. MOORE: Okay. If -- we're going to
24 have another opportunity for questions later on. So
25 if you have some, well, you'll be given a chance.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 What I'd like to do now is talk a bit
2 about scoping. We've been here for quite awhile to a
3 scoping meeting, and we're finally going to talk about
4 scoping.

5 As Maurice said, the public scoping
6 comment period began with the publication in the
7 Federal Register of a notice of intent to prepare this
8 programmatic environmental impact statement. That was
9 on May 5. And the scoping period will extend until
10 July 5. And scoping meetings are being held around
11 the country, primarily on both coasts, and here in
12 Austin for the Gulf Coast emphasis.

13 And at scoping meetings, what we're really
14 interested in hearing, as Maurice said earlier, is
15 comments from interested parties to help us frame the
16 analysis and the programmatic environmental impact
17 statement, things like alternatives that folks think
18 we should consider, issues that are particularly
19 significant that folks want to make sure that we
20 include in our analysis, technologies that we should
21 consider, and so on.

22 And once again, we're not looking at any
23 specific project. Any project-specific analysis will
24 be handled on a case-by-case basis. And this is
25 covering the whole country in a programmatic way,

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 trying to set the stage for doing more site-
2 specific/project-specific environmental assessments
3 when those projects come forward.

4 We have talked about some of the things
5 involved in this project. What I would urge you to do
6 is go to the project web site. It is up. Hopefully,
7 some of you have already seen it -- OCS.anl.gov.

8 One of the reasons we asked you to give us
9 your e-mail address when you arrived this evening was
10 so we can send you e-mail messages when new postings
11 are on the web site. You can be alerted that there's
12 something new there you can go and look for. Results
13 of scoping will be there. We'll publish a scoping
14 summary report that will be on the web site.

15 And whatever is news and current regarding
16 this project will be on that web site on a regular
17 basis. And the web site provides a very, very
18 convenient way to provide comments. There's a comment
19 form on the web site or -- there will be -- yes, there
20 is now. And you not only can put comments on that
21 form; you can attach things to it. Information that
22 you have that you would like us to have can be
23 attached if they're in digital format.

24 You received a comment card when you
25 checked in this evening. That comment card can serve

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 a couple of purposes. One is: As you're sitting
2 here, you can write some comments on it and leave it
3 with us. Later on, you can write comments on there
4 and mail it to us. Or you can sue the address that
5 you find on the comment card to mail us a whole box of
6 stuff. And we'd like that, too.

7 You know, information that you have
8 regarding technology or how you think we ought to be
9 doing the environmental analysis and the programmatic
10 environmental impact statement and those kinds of
11 things are very useful and helpful to us. Source of
12 information that you want us to use and think we might
13 not have -- all of that's good stuff.

14 And you can also provide your comments
15 here orally this evening. You -- we asked you to
16 indicate when you registered if you would like to
17 comment. And some people said they would like to do
18 that -- actually, one person so far.

19 (Laughter.)

20 MR. MOORE: But you do not have to have
21 said that you want to comment when you registered in
22 order to provide a comment. So we'll give you that
23 opportunity later on.

24 And because of the huge crowd, we're going
25 to limit comments to three minutes. And -- but we

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 won't (No response.) That very
2 closely.

3 If you have materials that you would like
4 to leave with us to extend your comments, well, please
5 do that. We'd be happy to receive them. We have a
6 court reporter taking a transcript a verbatim
7 transcript of your comments. And that'll be available
8 for you and anybody else who wants to look at it.

9 Please, when you do make a comment, state
10 your name and the organization that you represent. We
11 want to make sure we get that right.

12 And I think we're ready to hear the first
13 speaker, Joe Zebrowski from the Sierra Club.

14 MR. ZEBROWSKI: I'm going to refrain from
15 making official Sierra Club comments at this point,
16 because I want to coordinate with the rest of the
17 members --

18 MR. MOORE: Please speak into that so the
19 recorder gets that.

20 MR. ZEBROWSKI: Okay.

21 I'm going to coordinate my formal input
22 with the rest of my club membership. So --

23 MR. MOORE: Okay. Wait just a couple
24 seconds.

25 (Pause.)

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 MR. MOORE: And then please state your
2 name.

3 MR. ZEBROWSKI: Okay. My name is Joe
4 Zebrowski; I'm with the Lone Star chapter of the
5 Sierra Club. And we'll be presenting a formal club-
6 wide response -- or at least the Lone Star chapter-
7 wide input into the programmatic EIS.

8 So at this time, I'll just limit my
9 comments to say that we're very appreciative of the
10 opportunity that you've given us to review and comment
11 on this whole proposal and the whole concept here. We
12 believe it's crucial that we have meaningful public
13 participation through all phases of the offshore
14 energy site selection and development and that all
15 substantial environmental concerns be addressed and
16 remedied.

17 And what we'll be providing is a more
18 detailed kind of laundry list of the factors we are
19 particularly interested in seeing addressed. So I'll
20 hold off for written comments on that part.

21 MR. MOORE: Thank you very much. Di you
22 want to leave anything with us?

23 MR. ZEBROWSKI: I'll send it in.

24 MR. MOORE: You'll send it in on the web
25 site?

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 MR. ZEBROWSKI: Right.

2 MR. MOORE: All right.

3 Now, with that priming of the pump, is
4 there anyone else who would like to give us some
5 comments this evening?

6 (Pause.)

7 MR. MOORE: Anybody else have any more
8 questions?

9 (Pause.)

10 MR. MOORE: Anybody have any advice?

11 MR. ZEBROWSKI: I have a question.

12 MR. MOORE: Sure.

13 MR. ZEBROWSKI: For Mr. Butterfield, the
14 current wind projects that are in development here in
15 this country and actually overseas -- how would you
16 kind of personally assess the environmental monitoring
17 proposals or actually ongoing environmental monitoring
18 that has been involved in those projects -- the bird
19 impact studies and things like that? Have you been
20 tracking that and paying attention to those
21 activities?

22 MR. BUTTERFIELD: I'm probably a lousy
23 person to ask about the environmental impact
24 statements or the environmental monitoring, but I can
25 tell you what I know. In the early '80s, there was --

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 the bird problem really cropped up in Altamont Pass.
2 And that's one of the first developments. And it was
3 an area where raptors perched around the perimeter but
4 not in the center, because -- if you've ever been
5 there, you could see that there wasn't anything in the
6 center until wind turbines came along, nor were there
7 any population of gophers, for example.

8 And when we came in, we disturbed the soil
9 by making foundations, and that sort of gave the
10 gophers something to live in. And that brought in the
11 raptors. And it was an unfortunate situation because
12 the -- we certainly did have some problems there. And
13 that has been the black eye of the wind energy
14 since -- well, for 25 years.

15 Since then, we've put about 5- to \$6
16 million into studying the problem there at Altamont
17 Pass and at other places. And a set of guidelines
18 have been written, too, for -- to guide companies in
19 how they develop a project, how they select a site,
20 what things they need to look for to avoid
21 interactions with avians. And that seems to have
22 worked quite well.

23 To my knowledge, there's no projects since
24 Altamont Pass that have had any real problems. And
25 when I say, "Real problems," I can't quote you how

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 many bird kills there are, but the statistics I've
2 seen other people present are that wind turbines kill
3 far fewer than cats and far, far fewer than buildings,
4 transmission towers and things like that.

5 Bats is another issue that has come up in
6 West Virginia that they've made the mistake of putting
7 a site where they didn't realize there was a very
8 short seasonal period where bats migrate at night.
9 And that caused a problem. And so they're going
10 through mitigation on how to handle that.

11 Going to Europe, they've studied the avian
12 interactions quite a bit. They have radar tracking of
13 that site and -- the site that I showed you for Horns
14 Rev. They actually have these wonderful radar
15 tracking streak lines showing flocks of birds coming
16 at -- not flocks, but birds coming at the site and
17 then flying around it.

18 And so they monitor bird kills at the
19 site, and they monitor flying, fly-bys and so on. And
20 I can't quote you what the statistics are, but they
21 seem to be proud of showing the statistics or showing
22 the results, so they must be happy with the results.

23 Marine environment. There was a site
24 in -- for offshore, there was a tower put in 40 miles
25 offshore, off the German north shore, for studying

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 several things. And the wind and wave interactions --
2 the design requirements -- that is: The design
3 environment -- as well as the impact on marine
4 environment. And this is sort of a precursor to
5 deploying larger wind plants.

6 And that whole study has been going on
7 for -- I think the tower has been active for four
8 years. It's being handled by a certification company
9 in Germany named Germanischer Lloyd, and that has
10 produced a plethora of information.

11 And so I guess, in summary, I can say that
12 the Europeans have tracked this quite a bit. They
13 also care about wind turbine noise, the noise coming
14 off of rotors, and that has dramatically changed in
15 the last 25 or 30 years. The machines are much
16 quieter now.

17 If you've never seen one of these large
18 turbines run, I encourage you to do that, because only
19 by standing next to one of these machines will you
20 begin to understand how noisy they are from your own
21 perspective and what the sort of relative impact is.

22 I think most people's minds are -- those
23 people who have said or have been left with the
24 impression that wind turbines are bird killers; you
25 know, they're bird Cuisinarts and they're very noisy

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 and you can hardly hear yourself think when you're
2 standing next to one -- that's not the case. But you
3 can only come to that conclusion by going to see one
4 yourself. So I would encourage you to take a tour.

5 There's lots of information on the web
6 sites on environmental impact statements or
7 environmental assessments in Europe. And so I guess
8 I'd encourage you to Google those sites. There's --
9 I can't remember the one in Denmark off the top of my
10 head, but there's quite a bit of information. And
11 there's also quite a bit of information going on in
12 the United States or quite a few studies.

13 So I think we can direct you to those
14 if -- but that's not our purpose tonight. Our purpose
15 is to listen, so --

16 MR. MOORE: Yes. I'd like to mention one.
17 The Argonne National Laboratory assisted the Bureau of
18 Land Management in preparing a wind energy
19 programmatic environmental impact statement for the 11
20 western states. The web site for that project is
21 still up. The EIS was completed a bit over a year
22 ago, but the web site is still up, and it still gets
23 activity and action. And it contains an awful lot of
24 information about some of the questions you asked, as
25 well as a lot of others. And that's Windeis.anl.gov.

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 MR. HILL: Yes. And it's our intent as
2 part of, you know, putting together this programmatic
3 EIS to look at all that data and to conduct a
4 literature review worldwide to determine what has
5 happened so far. So we'll, you know, put that into
6 our EIS. You should see it in the draft.

7 MR. MOORE: Yes? Let me -- where did that
8 go?

9 (Pause.)

10 MR. MOORE: I'd like you to use the
11 microphone so we can capture the question on the tape
12 recorder.

13 MR. GORECKI: Is this on?

14 MR. MOORE: Yes.

15 MR. GORECKI: I just had a quick question
16 about a lot of the issues. Some of them that -- were
17 brought up on the web site with the EIS programmatic
18 statement that you guys plan on doing with issues --
19 environmental issues such as electromagnetic field
20 disturbance from the power lines or vibrations from
21 the wind towers.

22 These are kind of -- other than like the
23 flight -- I mean flight patterns with birds are kind
24 of site specific whereas, like, you know, south Texas,
25 for example, we're a big flight corridor for the South

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 American continent. But the east coast, I guess,
2 wouldn't fall in that category as much. But the
3 electromagnetic field and vibration disturbances are,
4 I guess, pretty universal.

5 Is this programmatic statement going to in
6 one way or another kind of shut the book on whether or
7 not that is a problem or is not a problem or --
8 because to my understanding, no one really knows for
9 sure.

10 MR. MOORE: Let me suggest that you
11 actually do have a comment.

12 MR. GORECKI: That was a question. I --
13 it's not a question period?

14 MR. MOORE: I know. I understand that.
15 But you've given us some good information, and I would
16 appreciate it if you'd kind of frame that as something
17 you would like us to address and to include in the
18 programmatic environmental impact statement. And if
19 you would, say your name again and the organization
20 you represent.

21 MR. GORECKI: My name is Ed Gorecki. I
22 work for the Hart Research Institute for Gulf of
23 Mexico Studies at A&M/Corpus Christi.

24 And I guess as a comment from a student
25 standpoint, because I'm still actually a graduate

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

(202) 234-4433

www.nealrgross.com

1 student, I would definitely recommend more involvement
2 of academic institutions in such a process. I think
3 that would be a great learning experience for a lot of
4 people, not to mention, you know, you're going to get
5 more, hopefully, future employees out of such an act.
6 So --

7 MR. MOORE: Sure.

8 MR. HILL: Sure. And just to address your
9 question when it was a question, yes, we're definitely
10 going to look into EMF. And I can't say that we're
11 going to put it to rest, but we're going to, you know,
12 look at all the current data that is out there and all
13 the studies world wide and address that and present
14 that in the document. So thank you for raising that.

15 MR. MOORE: Thank you. See? You had a
16 comment.

17 MR. CHEW: Yes. In an EIS, you know, of
18 course, we use the best available information, but
19 there's always new stuff coming out. So you never
20 really put anything to rest; you just do the best you
21 can with the information at the time.

22 MR. HILL: Yes.

23 MR. MOORE: Anyone else have a question
24 comment or a comment question?

25 (Laughter.)

NEAL R. GROSS

COURT REPORTERS AND TRANSCRIBERS
1323 RHODE ISLAND AVE., N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-3701

1 (Pause.)

2 MR. MOORE: You're sure about that?

3 (Pause.)

4 MR. MOORE: Okay.

5 MR. HILL: Okay. Well, if there are no
6 more questions or comments, I will say that this
7 public scoping meeting is closed. Thank you very much
8 for your attendance.

9 (Whereupon, at 8:43 p.m., this meeting was
10 concluded.)

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25